

The Great White Throne Judgment

A Great Conundrum to religions of all persuasions is the Enigma of DEATH without any Opportunity for Salvation. Having overlooked Biblical Evidence, Religiosity has entangled itself in Confounding and Contradicting Explanations. In fact, Scripture offers answers that Religion can't provide!

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A well known, oft quoted scripture makes the claim that, “*God is not willing that any should perish...*” Yet, we are forced to acknowledge that by far the vast majority of all who have ever lived are obviously perished and perishing! We might say, it was their choice, but then, what of those who never heard? And, what of those who die very young? The unconverted constitute the greater majority, and a large percentage of them, fairly said, not due to any real fault of their own.

Leaving aside the persuasion that teaches that ones’ final sentencing comes at the time of death, within our own genre of believers, there is a surprising diversity of opinion as to how the ‘final judgment’ of all humanity will play out. We have those who base their explanations on there being only two resurrections, which to great degree contorts the explanations of there being any future period of opportunity for those who died without ever having had an opportunity for salvation.

More Than ONE Resurrection

A clear prophecy explains that the rest of the dead (those not raised in the ‘first resurrection’) will not live again until the 1000 years are finished. That’s in Revelation 20, verse 5. From this, we know that the rest of the dead WILL live again, and that the timeframe for their restoration to life will be after the millennium. But, it’s the purpose for this ‘second’ resurrection that is the basis of widely varying explanations. Will their resurrections be merely for the purpose of a ‘final sentencing’ to death and the Lake of Fire, or will it at last provide them the opportunity they never had?

If it is for final sentencing only, then why wait out the 1000 years for just that? Such an assignment could have been imposed right at Christ’s Second Coming, could it not? Just the fact of a lengthy wait suggests something worthy of our serious consideration. Could it be that there is no just assignment for these at this point in time? In other words, that their spiritual situation is not yet determined, in that they were never provided any real chance to make an informed decision? Though unconverted, these reserved until after the 1000 years are ended, are not worthy of eternal death just yet. This is the important underlying message of the long-term delay in raising them to life again.

A Judgment Period?

Within the same chapter that acquaints us with the fact of there being a second resurrection, we are introduced to an event called “the Great White Throne” judgment. Revelation 20:11-12 explain a scene where “*the books are opened*” to them along with another book, the Book of Life, being opened also. This scene is presented just after the defeat and removal from society of the briefly-released Satan, his demons and the defeat of his vast human army. This societal upheaval, after the 1000 years but before the Great White Throne, poses further profound consideration. IF that ‘judgment’ is merely a sentencing event, what possible purpose would Satan’s release (after 1000 years of imprisonment) serve? Wouldn’t he and all his wicked followers stand together and be consigned together to everlasting punishment? The fact of Satan being kept from influencing millennial society, and being consigned to a fate separate of the ‘rest of the dead’ who will come up after his final removal, suggests a very different ‘judgment environment’ for them.

When we, as students of the bible, recognize the distinction between verses 12 and 13 of Revelation 20, it then becomes clearer as to why these events are to happen as stated. Further indication of these multiple resurrections can be discerned from the very comparable passage found in the Gospel of John chapter 5. In that earlier narrative, Christ punctuates each of the various resurrections with a “most assuredly” (“verily, verily” (in the KJV)) and “marvel not”! Such assertive prefaces tell us that these are to be actual events, not at all theoretical!

Revelation 20:12 shows a time when ‘the books are to be opened’, but only “those who hear” will arise, (suggesting that in this resurrection not all will hear this call) while verse 13 provides no such qualification, and with that final call, ALL will hear, as John 5 indicates.¹ In other words, the second resurrection calls up a select echelon of dead, opening ‘the books’ (the Bible) to their understanding, and the Book of Life for possibly entering their names. The final call raises ALL of the dead, excluding none, to the final sentencing event. At this ‘sentencing phase’, the book of Life will be used to see if their name is in it, but not to at that point enter them.

This involvement of the Book of Life further indicates that the purpose for the (post-millennial) resurrection is for the purpose of providing opportunity for names to be added. If no further names are to be added, beyond the time of the Second Coming, then what would be the purpose of refer-ring to the Book of Life? We would already know that ALL of those names that had been in it would be of people who were born into an immortal spirit existence back before the millennium!

Do we not have sufficient cause at this point to see that there is much to be discerned from the unique information we are provided in these Scriptures? Not only is God not willing that any should perish, but that He has a Plan by which to allow the greatest number possible the opportunity to avail themselves of salvations full benefit. HOW does He plan to do that?

Will ALL Become “Saved”?

But, is this remotely suggesting some sort of ‘Universal Salvation’ situation? No, not at all. We have considerable evidence that free moral agency will yield a large contingent who will ultimately reject salvation and side with Satan. We have such people even in our modern generation. The response when Satan is released at the end of the 1000 years is quite telling. For the final generation of the millennial age to offer such a large following in such short order, it challenges credibility! (Rev. 20:8)

It isn’t a matter of all becoming saved, it **is** a matter of all being provided an opportunity for salvation. Not all of the dead at that time are to be raised, just those who died without ever having had any viable opportunity. This is the key point to understand. Those who never had ‘the books’ opened to their understanding, and certainly those who never even had access to these books, will be provided an opportunity. They are destined to be called at this latter time. Also, a great number of people never could fathom the Bible in their lifetimes. This is no accident.² God has purposely blinded certain individuals, even whole ethnicities, in order to “have mercy” upon them! How does that work?

*“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and **the rest were blinded** (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;**) unto this day ...**For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.**” (Rom. 11:7-8 & 32 quoting Isaiah 29:10) Now, if it is in fact God who decides to blind them until some future point in time, then how can we put the blame on them? And, how is their being blinded merciful? If God has set them in a blinded state, what does that say*

¹ Request the harmonization of the Revelation 20 and John 5 accounts, which bring out the clarity of each of these two Christ uttered accounts.

² Examples: John 12:40; Romans 11:7 & 32; Isaiah 29:10; 2nd Corinthians 3:14 & 4:4.

regarding their opportunity? Obviously, there's something we need to understand about this situation. Not the least of which is the simple fact that they can not complete their salvation process while still dead!

What Did the Early Church Know?

What did the Church know about this, and how did they know it? And, why does religiosity in general today not understand something so basic?

This is where observing God's annual Holy Days is instructive. The early Church understood that there are to be TWO harvests of humanity. Most in our world represents there being just one! You see, they, by keeping the spring and fall Holydays had a general sense of their purpose: To illustrate a lesser (firstfruits) **harvest** followed by a later, greater **harvest** (of ingathering) later in the year. What is in some circles referred to as "the early and the latter rains". James in his epistle spoke of this consideration, in chapter 5, verse 7. He speaks to the situation of a farmer waiting patiently for the harvests. His not needing to explain this to his readers suggests that they were familiar with what he was referring to, a concept also presented in the book of Deuteronomy.

What Exactly IS Judgment?

When readers encounter the word 'judgment', what first registers typically is the idea of condemnation. That first presumption can limit ones' understanding. The word judgment has a broader application than that. It also can and, often as not, does refer to an evidentiary phase. Places such as 1st Peter 4:17 express one evaluative situation. "*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...*" This is understood also in the context of early and latter rains: this generation, called of God into His Church, is undergoing their **evaluation** phase now, while the rest of humanity waits. Their evaluation comes later. The Church is not in the process of undergoing condemnation. It's now being 'worked with', purified, and trained for millennial rulership, while the rest will undergo their evaluation period later, under 'better conditions', we might add. (In a society absent of Satan.)

This also touches upon the matter of 'predestination'. That too is a misunderstood phenomenon. Most see it as some being called, while the rest are barred from ever attaining salvation. No, rather, predestination is not irreversibly exclusive, it is a matter of the timing of ones' calling. It isn't that some are predestined to be called while others are not ever to be. ALL are destined to be called. It remains a matter of **when**, some earlier, at the Father's discretion, with the greater majority provided their opportunity later.

We can see the structure of that in two related verses in the Gospel of John. In verse 6:44, we are made aware that one **can not come** to Christ unless the Father specifically draws them. But later (in fact a Holyday season later) we see that there is to be a wide open '**whosoever wills**' opportunity period. That's in John 7:37-38. Chapter 6 of John was spoken in the context of a *spring* Holyday season, (see v.6:4) while chapter 7's statement was in the *fall* Holyday season. (v.7:2) (Compare John 7:37-38 with Revelation 22:17) These two contrasting statements are not contradictory. Again, understanding the Holydays of God provides us with an awareness of the two conditions: In this present era, calling is limited, but in the ages to come, it'll be **unlimited**. There are those predestined to be called now, but the rest will have opportunity later, in accordance with their own desire.

Understanding this is one benefit of understanding the Biblical Holydays. The Holydays are oriented around agricultural harvests, but *illustrate* the two- phase spiritual harvests of humanity. The spring Holydays present the essential aspects of **personal** salvation, but the fall set are oriented around **world** salvation. The early Church observed these days, though not in the manner that their Jewish counter-parts did. In fact, they were criticized for HOW they were observing them, not for their NOT observing them. Read of that in Colossians 2:17, where Paul refers to holydays as "*a shadow of things to come.*" In other words, they present us with an outline of future events. First century Judaism didn't comprehend their fullest meanings!

On to the Greater Harvest

First, in preparation for this post-millennial resurrection involving such a great mass of humanity, advance preparation will be necessary.

The Saints of the Most High God, raised immortal as Spirit Beings at the first resurrection, will have attained by that time a thousand years of proficiency, ruling with and under the King of Kings. God's Saints will rule that society, consisting of the survivors of the Great Tribulation and their descendants who live and die as peoples do now, with the optimum lifespan being the century mark! (Isaiah 65) (But, as we see in Isaiah's account, there will be some who spurn their opportunity for conversion even in the millennial age! Some will die accursed! (v.20)

The final generation of the millennial age will then be 'cleansed' of all its resentful types by Satan's deception. (My article on "*Why Satan MUST be Released*" explains this in greater detail.) The 'rest of the dead' will then be raised into a world providing them with the best possible circumstance. Deception and opposition to God's rule will be absent and their rulers will have gained 1000 years of experience in dealing with mortal flaws. The best possible environment for a successful attainment of Eternal Life. This is the "mercy"³ God has in store for those who God chose to blind, or who were not afforded an opportunity in their natural lifetimes. God knows who has a high probability of success should He call them, and who has a low probability, either as a result of their environment or as a result of their natural human tendencies. In order to effect the greatest possible number for inclusion into His Eternal Family, He mercifully delayed the 'calling' of the majority. Even, and especially, His Chosen Peoples!

This is the Great White Throne judgment period that Revelation 20 presents us with. We could also refer to it as "the Last Great Day", which is the Holy Day that pictures this era, or 'the post-millennial age'. The Last Great Day is that 'eighth day' referred to in Leviticus 23, which is observed after the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.⁴

Born Into the Family of God

That leaves us with the question: When do these enter the Spirit-Born state of being? For that matter, when are those who become converted during the millennial age made Spirit?

We've already considered the life situations of the millennial generation, explained in Isaiah 65. They live and die just as people do now. Some die converted, some die un-converted. Also, just as now.

But the second resurrection people, what of them? They live again, restored to physical life, and are given their opportunity for salvation. Considering that these who are resurrected include many who died in infancy, it must logically provide them a lifetime into adulthood. If they are given the same longevity as are the millennial generation, then they too could live to see the century mark. However, this is Biblically unspecified. Also, considering that they are resurrected once, would it be logical for them to die briefly, only to be raised again for their final sentencing?

Facing the Ultimate END

But then, with the millennial age complete, and the post-millennial age nearing completion, (these eras are time-limited) we are faced with the ultimate question: What happens now? We have all those who died

³ Romans 11:32

⁴ Also referred to in John 7:37, a day in which He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to any who desire to receive it. Certainly the condition that will exist in the post-millennial age. Ezekiel 37 speaks to this situation as it involves the 'whole house of Israel'. The similarity of language between John 7:38 and Revelation 21:6 is noteworthy. Revelation 21 speaks to this same post-Advent age.

prior to the Second Coming, unconverted,⁵ still in their graves, and all those who lived and died in the millennial age, converted and unconverted, in their graves, and the great mass of humanity who are to live again in the Great White Throne era, converted and unconverted, alive, but still awaiting sentencing. These dead come up to join those previously resurrected for final sentencing.

As this period draws to a close, a **third** resurrection brings all these up together: the contingent referred to in Revelation 20:13 and John 5:28-29. It is that event Christ specifically explained in Matthew 25:31-46. **This** is when those converted in the millennial and post-millennial ages are awarded their just rewards: Eternal Life. Those who didn't avail themselves of their opportunity are then assigned to death in the Lake of Fire. This is the Final Sentencing event!

A similar scene is presented in the latter half of Revelation 14. The White Cloud harvest (again presenting this as the **harvest** of humanity – the second great harvest.) reaps all those worthy of being brought into the Spirit Level of existence, children of Christ and His Bride. This is when the earth's harvest (of souls) is fully ripened, with there being no expectation of any further ripening, should time continue. (Rev.14:15 & 18)

So the Great White Throne is a period of evaluative judgment, between the second and third resurrections. It's the third that's the occasion for sentencing. The purpose of this Last Great Day is to provide opportunity to all who never had opportunity. 

⁵ Those who had opportunity for conversion prior to the first resurrection, but who failed to avail themselves of it or who ultimately rejected it, do not live again in the second resurrection era. They sleep on thru the Great White Throne era until the 'final sentencing' event at the end.